

Amendments to the Claims:

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings of claims in the application:

Listing of Claims:

1-41. (Canceled)

42. (Currently amended) A method for determining an inflammatory bowel disease (IBD) or pre-IBD phenotype of a test cell from a given tissue, said method comprising:

(a) determining an expression level of at least one gene product in said test cell, wherein said gene product is an mRNA of a gene selected from the group consisting of macrophage inflammatory protein-2 β (GRO3), neutrophil lipocalin (HNL), macrophage elastase (MMP-12), elastase specific inhibitor (elafin), and type VI collagen α 3 chain (COL6A3); and

(b) comparing the expression level of said gene product in said test cell to an expression level of said gene product in a control cell of the given tissue type,

wherein a difference in the expression level of said gene product indicates that said test cell has an IBD or pre-IBD phenotype.

43. (Previously presented) The method of claim **42**, wherein said IBD is ulcerative colitis (UC).

44. (Previously presented) The method of claim **42**, wherein said IBD is Crohn's disease (CD).

45. (Previously presented) The method of claim **42**, comprising distinguishing between UC and CD.

46. (Previously presented) The method of claim **42**, wherein the expression level of said gene product differs by at least a factor of two.

47. ((Previously presented) The method of claim 42, wherein said test cell is obtained from a needle biopsy core, a surgical resection sample, a bowel sample, lymph node tissue, or serum.

48. (Previously presented) The method of claim 42, wherein the expression level of said gene product is determined using Northern blot analysis, reverse transcription-polymerase chain reaction, in situ hybridization, or an array.

49. (Previously presented) The method of claim 48, wherein said array comprises nucleic acid probes that specifically hybridize to said gene product and a substrate to which said nucleic acid probes are bound.

50. (Previously presented) The method of claim 49, wherein said substrate is selected from the group consisting of paper, membranes, filters, chips, pins, and glass.

51. (Previously presented) The method of claim 49, wherein said nucleic acid probes are bound to said substrate by covalent bonds or hydrophobic interactions.

52. (Previously presented) The method of claim 49, wherein said nucleic acid probes are spotted onto said substrate in a two-dimensional matrix or array.